



LITANIES AND LIMERICKS

February 9, 1992

Jane Mallett Theatre
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THE ESPRIT ORCHESTRA
Alex Pauk
Music Director and Conductor

LITANIES AND LIMERICKS
February 9, 1992
Jane Mallett Theatre

PROGRAMME **LITANIES AND LIMERICKS**

featuring

Special Guest Artists
Elmer Iseler Singers

and
Jean Stilwell
mezzo soprano

Little Rose* (1992)
for orchestra

Raymond Luedeke (Canada)

Litaneia (1984)
for choir and orchestra

John Rea (Canada)

INTERMISSION

Three Limericks (1979)
for choir, mezzo soprano and chamber orchestra

Harry Somers (Canada)

- I. The Barmaid from Crale
- II. Danse Macabre
- III. Adam

* World Premiere commissioned by The Esprit Orchestra

Tonight's performance is being recorded by the CBC for broadcast on *Arts National* and *Two New Hours*, 94.1 on the FM dial.

INVITATION

The Board of Directors of The Esprit Orchestra invites you to stay for complimentary coffee in the theatre lobby after the performance.



LITTLE ROSE - Programme Note

Little Rose takes its title from the first two words of a collection of love poetry, The Captain's Verses, by the Chilean poet, Pablo Neruda. The words "Little Rose" are addressed to Matilde Urrutia, the subject of poems which express not only the passionate devotion of love but also its quarrels. This swing between passionate tenderness and angry determination is reflected in the music, which sometimes even reflects both sentiments simultaneously.

Formally, the music for *Little Rose* alternates two large sections, one lyrical and the other dramatic and contrapuntal. These sections alternate three times. The last section uses closing material from the lyrical music to form a coda.

Little Rose is dedicated to the composer's daughter. Ann, another "Little Rose".

RAYMOND LUEDEKE

Raymond Luedeke has lived in Canada for the past eleven years as Associate Principal Clarinet with the Toronto Symphony. Luedeke studied composition in the United States and abroad at such well known schools as the Eastman School of Music in Rochester and the Vienna Akademie and worked with important teachers such as George Crumb and Alan Stout.

Luedeke's list of compositions is extensive: much symphonic music, chamber music, music for winds and brass, choral works, etc. Works which have attracted attention in recent years include *Tales of the Netsilik* for narrator and orchestra (commissioned by six Canadian orchestras), *The Moon in the Labyrinth* for harp and string quartet (recorded by Judy Loman and the Orford Quartet), *The Transparency of Time* for piano and orchestra (recorded by Andre LaPlante and the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra), and *The North Wind's Gift* (performed by the Toronto Symphony on their 1990 European Tour).

Ray Luedeke is currently working on a violin concerto for Scott St. John and Orchestra London, and on a chamber opera for the Guelph Spring Festival.





LITANEIA - Programme Note

It is not the sentiment of tragic pathos which first comes to mind when one considers the theatrical works of Aristophanes (5th-century B.C.). Quite the contrary, it is their irony and ribaldry. Nevertheless, in one of his most famous plays The Birds, the great comic genius allows a chorus of birds to address his audience in words imbued with such a sentiment along with a profound spiritual content.

O MANKIND! WHOSE NATURE IT IS TO LIVE IN OBSCURITY,
LIKE THE THINGS WE CALL LEAVES,
EXHAUSTED, SHADOW-LIKE AND FRAGILE RACE,
CASTINGS OF CLAY,
WINGLESS, EPHEMERAL, MISERABLE MORTALS, YOU
MEN: SHEER PHANTOMS.
LISTEN ATTENTIVELY TO US, THE IMMORTALS,
THE EVERLASTING,
THE AIR-BORNE, THE UNDYING, THE IMPERISHABLE
WHOSE MUSE UPON THE SOUL.
AND ONCE WE HAVE TOLD YOU THE WHOLE TRUTH
ABOUT THE COSMOS,
THE NATURE OF BIRDS, THE BIRTH OF THE GODS, OF
RIVERS, OF THE UNDERWORLD AND OF CHAOS,
AND ONCE YOU HAVE BEEN ENLIGHTENED, ACCORDING
TO ME LET OLD PHILOSOPHERS WORRY
ABOUT THE REST!

In their capacity as witnesses to human folly, the birds speak like demi-gods or like angels to men. Their words sound like a prayer but in reverse: listening to the chorus, an audience would be moved by the supplication being directed to it.

Throughout the parabasis (an extended section for chorus in the play) of which these are but the first eight lines, the birds implore men to lead a good and simple life, and to learn from them, to imitate them. Indeed, they are trying to convince men, albeit with pungent irreverence, to make them their gods! And that a Utopia for mankind is possible. It is not surprising then that the birds speak of the sophist Prodicus of Chios, a reference whose meaning becomes clearer when brought forward in time: now that we, say the birds, have illuminated all the truths, forget what an old Darwin or Einstein and all your teachers have told you.

Litaneia (sung in the original ancient Greek) is a setting of the beginning of the parabasis, together with the bird-song which Aristophanes himself invented and employed later on in this section. The composition is in one movement and the distribution of the lines and the song is as follows:



- | | | |
|------|----|---|
| Part | 1. | introduction - bird-song |
| | 2. | three lines of text |
| | 3. | bird-song |
| | 4. | two lines of text |
| | 5. | bird-song |
| | 6. | three lines of text |
| | 7. | conclusion: recitation of all eight lines |

As its Greek title suggests, *Litaneia* is an entreaty, a supplication and, like its cognate word litany, a series of repeated invocations.

I was attracted to these words of Aristophanes not only for their intrinsic beauty and poetic power, but also for what I believe is their timely message, even after 2,400 years!

This work for choir and orchestra was commissioned by the Choral Union of Wayne State University (Detroit, Michigan) through a grant from The Canada Council. It is dedicated to the ensemble's Director, Dennis Tini.

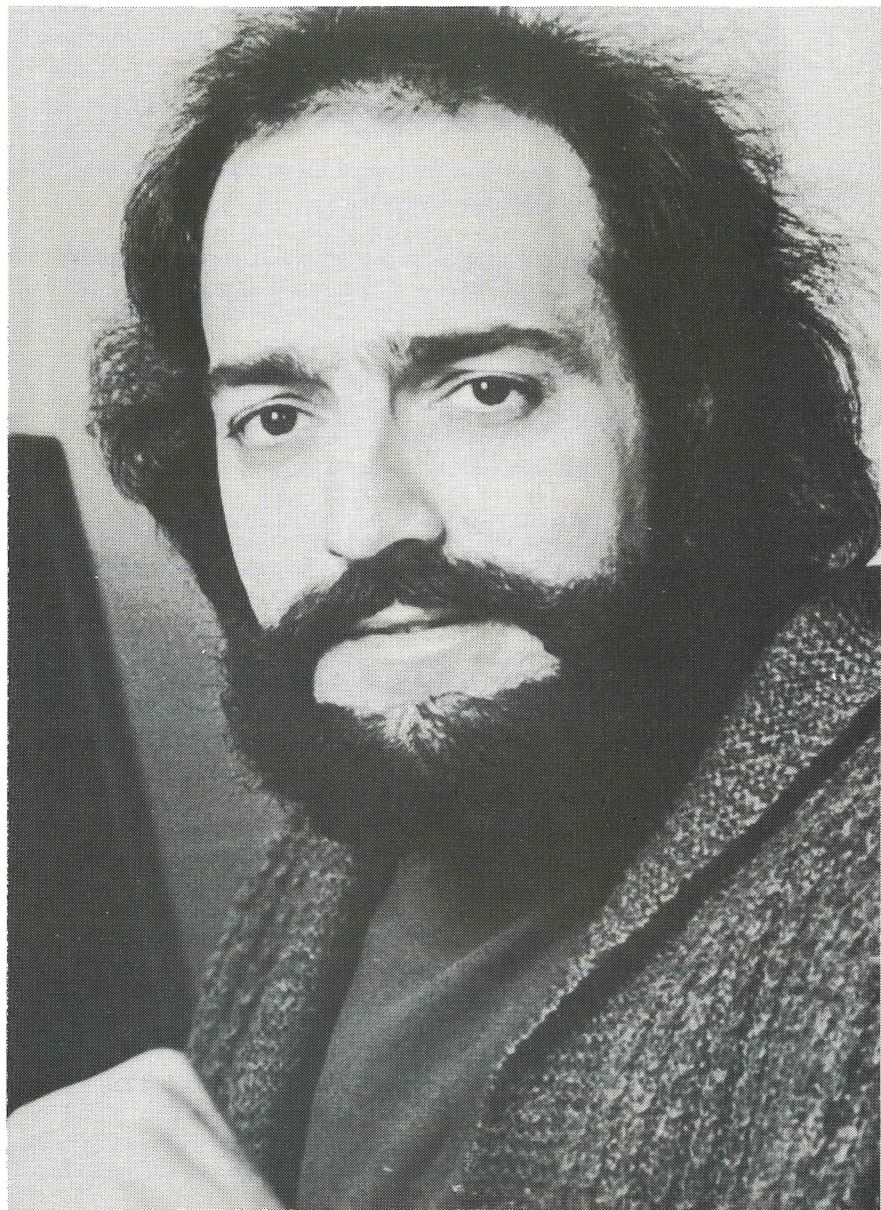
JOHN REA

Dr. John Rea was born in Toronto in 1944. He studied composition with John Weinzwieg and Gustav Ciamaga at the University of Toronto, and with Milton Babbitt at Princeton University, receiving his Ph.D. in 1978.

Recipient of many awards and commissions, John Rea has written music in several genres: solo, chamber, music theatre, orchestra, ballet, choral, opera and electronic music. Among his recent premieres are: *Some Time Later*, a work for a quartet of RAAD instruments of the Armin Electric Strings; a new orchestration for thirteen instruments of Claude Vivier's *Pulau Dewata*; *Over Time*, for large orchestra; *Offenes Lied*, for two sopranos and clarinet (this work was premiered at the International Festival in Montepulciano, Italy); *Time and Again*, for orchestra, was premiered during the Arts Festival at the Calgary Olympics in 1988.

Besides his activities as a composer, Rea has lectured and published articles on 20th-century music, and since 1973, has taught composition and music theory at McGill University, where he recently completed his term as Dean of the Faculty of Music. He was also a founding member of the Montreal new music society Les Evenements du Neuf, and since 1982 has been a member of the board of directors of Canada's first new music society - "La Societe de musique contemporaine du Quebec (SMCQ)".

In 1981, he won the Governor General's Prize (Prix Jules Leger) for new chamber music.





THREE LIMERICKS - Programme Note

Harry Somers wrote *Three Limericks* in 1980 as a tribute to Canadian composer and educator Dr. Healey Willan, who died in 1968. The work was commissioned by the Guleph Spring Festival to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Willan's birth, and was premiered by the Festival Singers under Elmer Iseler that year.

Somers took that occasion to create a tribute to the importance of Willan in Canadian musical life. By writing a work for voice, he honours Willan's great love for choral music and his well-recognized gifts in that field. But, rather than producing the solemn testimonial that was expected of him, Somers chose to capture Willan's ebullient spirit. "No one who had ever known Dr. Willan," writes Somers, "could forget that particular twinkle in his eye, or his smile which bordered on the mischevious. He was a wise, witty man. His roots were in Victorian England, but he had an intense dislike of false solemnity and pomposity."

Somers writes: "The first limerick, *The Barmaid From Crale*, I set like a scene from a musical comedy: the star and chorus from the famous 'Barmaid from Crale' scene. Rhythmically alive. Harmony tending towards the traditional, but with surprises. Tunes, slightly twisted at times. Dance numbers. Solo turns. Not the easiest work to perform - demanding alertness, style, vivacity.

I *The Barmaid From Crale* (Healey Willan)

"On the breasts of a barmaid from Crale
Were tatooed the prices of ale,
And on her behind,
For the sake of the blind,
Was the same information in braille."

"I set the second movement, *Danse Macabre*, to a limerick by W.H. Auden. Immediately to my mind - a series of associations: Christopher Isherwood and that talented group of English writers and poets, young in the 1920's and 30's. Perhaps a touch of Berlin. A cabaret singer with a kind of seedy chorus. A bit of a story, with a squinch of pseudo-philosophy in the centre, and one of those travellers in a number of languages, which remind me of certain popular singers of some years ago.

II *Danse Macabre* (W.H. Auden)

"As the poets have mournfully sung,
Death takes the innocent young,
The rolling-in-money,
The screamingly funny,
And those who are very well hung."



"Finally, *Adam*, his madam, the garden, genesis, innocence, creation, joy...the words unravelling throughout. (But I can't give it all away.) References here and there to various learned devices, which Dr. Willan might have found amusing. The culmination, a Jubilate - well, sort of."

III *Adam* (anonymous)

"In the Garden of Eden lay Adam,
Complacently stroking his madam,
And great was his mirth,
For on all of the earth,
There were only two balls - and he had 'em."

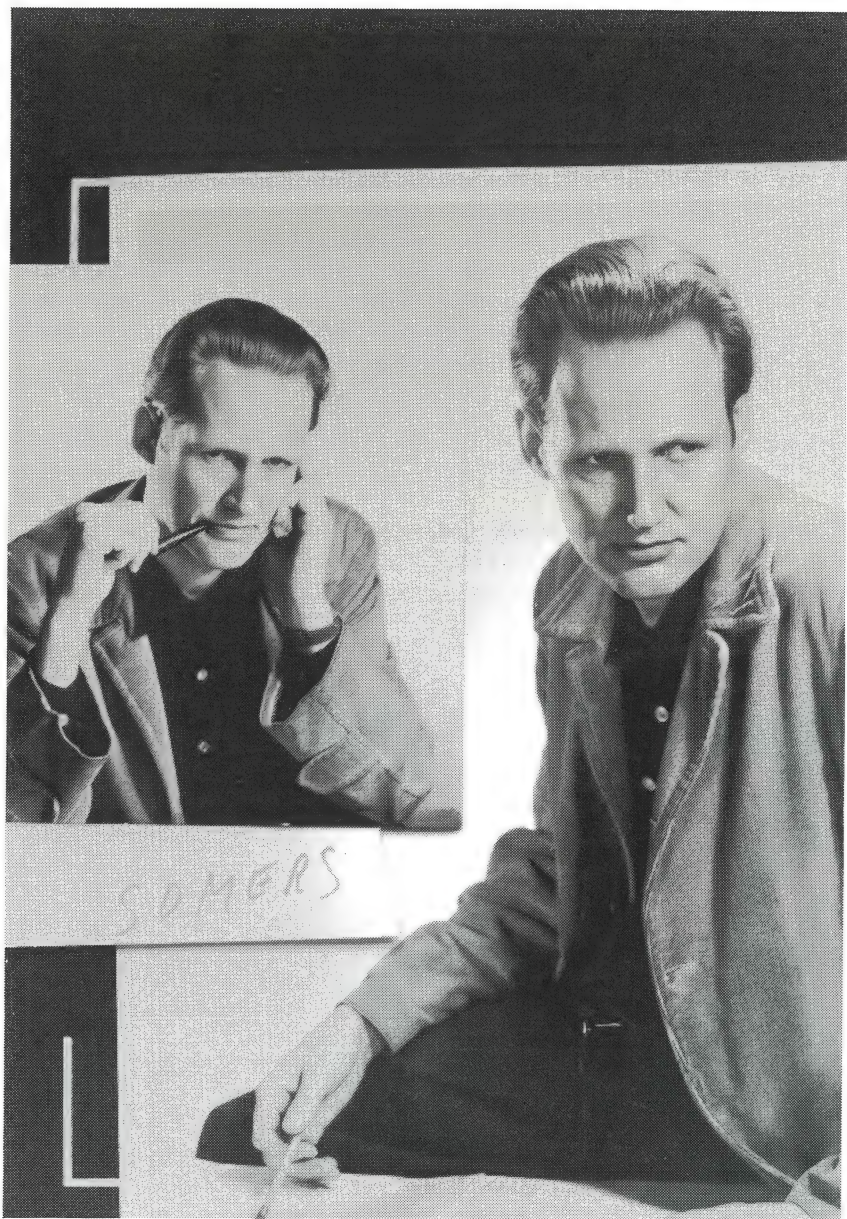
HARRY SOMERS

Harry Somers, O.C., was born in Toronto, Ontario in 1925, and showed an interest in music only in his early teens. He engaged in intensive piano studies, which were so productive that at the age of 16, he entered the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, where he studied piano with Reginald Godden and Weldon Kilburn, and composition with John Weinzwieg, receiving scholarships in 1947 and 1949. In the late 1940's, he went first to San Francisco to continue piano with E. Robert Schmitz, and then to Paris to study composition under Darius Milhaud (1949-50).

Somers is known not only for his great versatility, but also for his tremendous productivity. His music includes works for orchestra, choir, voice, instrumental ensemble and piano, as well as for the stage, film, and television. His best-known work is the opera *Louis Riel*, commissioned and performed with the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Washington, D.C., during the U.S. bicentennial celebrations.

Somers describes his artistic development: "Over the years I've worked consistently on three different levels with three different approaches to composition. On one level, my approach has been what I call 'community music' or 'music for use'. For example, music for amateurs and music for school use. On a second level, I've created 'functional music', in the specific sense: music for television, films and theatre, where the composition has to work in company with another medium and serve the demands of that medium. On a third level, I have created without consideration for any limitations, sometimes completely experimentally, sometimes extending the line of a particular direction on which I had been working through a series of works."

In 1971, Somers, who has become one of Canada's most internationally-known composers, was named a Companion of the Order of Canada. He has received honorary doctorates from the Universities of Toronto and Ottawa, and from York University.





ELMER ISELER SINGERS

The Elmer Iseler Singers, a twenty-one voice choir based in Toronto, has built an enviable international reputation since its debut performance in 1979. Under the leadership of Dr. Elmer Iseler, Canada's pre-eminent choral conductor, this justly celebrated choir makes over 100 appearances annually throughout Canada, the United States and Europe. The Singers, in their capacity as the professional core of the 190-voice Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, perform regularly with the Toronto Symphony, and have won critical acclaim at the Edinburgh Festival, London's Royal Albert Hall, and Carnegie Hall.

With a repertoire that spans 500 years of choral music, the Elmer Iseler Singers are noted for their flawless technique and wide interpretive range. Champions of contemporary choral repertoire, the Elmer Iseler Singers regularly commission and perform new works. The choir is frequently involved in radio and television broadcasts, and a wide variety of recording projects. The Elmer Iseler Singers won the Grand Prix du Disque (Canada) for *Serenade in Harmony*, recorded in 1984 with the Netherlands Chamber Choir, and again in 1989 for *Welcome Yule* and *Laudate Dominum*, the latter recorded with the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir.

The Elmer Iseler Singers have performed as guests of the Canadian Brass, and have made appearances at the Canada in Holland Festival, Expo '86, the Olympic Arts Festivals in Seoul and Calgary, and at the inaugural Joy of Singing International Choral Festival in Toronto. In addition, the Elmer Iseler Singers and Dr. Iseler are highly valued for their contributions to masterclasses and workshops for school and community choirs.





JEAN STILWELL - Mezzo Soprano

The arresting mezzo soprano of Jean Stilwell is being added to the pantheon of great Canadian voices. Her appearance in the title role of the EXPO 86/Vancouver Opera production of *Carmen* first brought her to international attention and acclaim. Since then, she has continued to garner accolades for her work in opera and oratorio, on both sides of the Atlantic.

Ms. Stilwell most recently returned to the Canadian Opera Company as Annius in Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito* following previous appearances as Bersi in *Andrea Chenier* and Annina in *Der Rosenkavalier*. In Vancouver, she has appeared as Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*, Olga in *Eugene Onegin*, Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*, and Maddalena in *Rigoletto*. Other roles have been Princess Marghanza in Souza's *El Capitan* with the Indiana Opera Theater, Musetta in *La Boheme* and in the title role of *Carmen* for Opera Lyra, and Dorabella in *Così fan Tutte* for the National Arts Centre in Ottawa.

Ms. Stilwell has become a regular performer with all of the Canadian orchestras. In 1989, she appeared in New York's Mostly Music Festival, with the Pittsburgh Symphony, and with the St. Louis Symphony.

Ms. Stilwell's debut at London's Wigmore Hall began what has been an active schedule in Europe. Operatic credits there have included Dorabella in *Così fan Tutte*, and the title role of *Carmen* with the Welsh National Opera.

In future engagements, Ms. Stilwell appears as Cherubino in *La nozze di Figaro* and in the title role of *Carmen* in Pittsburgh, and as Charlotte in *Werther* in Holland.



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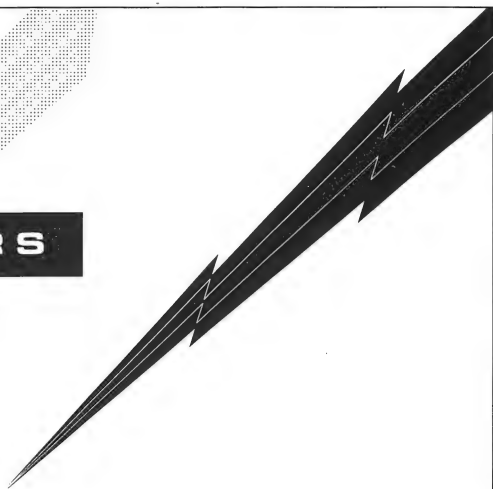
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ALEX PAUK - Music Director and Conductor



Photo - Linda Corbett

Alex Pauk has been a leading proponent of new music in Canada since 1971. After graduating from the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music in 1970, he participated in the Ontario Arts Council's Conductors' Workshop for two years, and did further work at the Toho Gakuen School of Music in Tokyo.

Both as a composer and a conductor, Mr. Pauk has been deeply involved with creating new music. As a founding member of such groups as *Arraymusic* and *Days Months and Years to Come*, he developed the skills and philosophy which lead to his founding The Esprit Orchestra as a primary force in the presentation of new Canadian music for orchestra.

Mr. Pauk's own orchestral compositions are widely performed. His works include concert music, film scores, radiophonic montages and music theatre pieces. Through his world-wide travels he not only brings diverse influences to his own creations, but is also able to search out music by foreign composers to present to Canadian audiences. At present, Mr. Pauk lives in his native Toronto and freelances as a composer and conductor in addition to being the Music Director of The Esprit Orchestra.

THE ESPRIT ORCHESTRA

February 9, 1992, Jane Mallett Theatre
Alex Pauk - Music Director and Conductor



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Marie Berard
Jayne Maddison
Jennifer Saleebey
Anne Armstrong

Violin II

Diane Tait
Ron Mah
Paul Zevenhuizen
Yakov Lerner

Viola

Valerie Kuinka
Beverley Spotton
Jonathan Craig

Cello

Paul Widner
Elaine Thompson

Bass

Roberto Occhipinti

Flute

Douglas Stewart
Maria Pelletier

Oboe

Lesley Young
Karen Rotenburg

Clarinet

Gwilym Williams
Richard Thomson

Bassoon

Jerry Robinson
William Cannaway

Horn

Miles Hearn
Gary Pattison

Trumpet

Stuart Laughton

Trombone and Euphonium

Herb Poole

Piano

David Swan

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Soprano

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THE ESPRIT ORCHESTRA

November 30, 1991, Jane Mallett Theatre

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Student group rates for all regular Esprit concerts, and

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If you are an educator, student or parent, and would like more information about the *Toward A Living Art* Programme, please contact the Esprit offices.

COFFEE CHATS

Esprit holds *Coffee Chats* prior to each concert. These informal gatherings give members of the public an opportunity to meet composers, musicians, and our Conductor in a musically informative social context. For more information, or to ensure that you receive an invitation to the next *Coffee Chat*, please visit our table in the lobby, or call our office.

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Thursday, February 20
A FEAST FOR MUSIC

The Esprit Orchestra presents its Imperial Peking Duck Banquet II - a fundraising dinner to benefit the Orchestra, served at Toronto's Fon San Restaurant, with Special Guest Maureen Forrester. Tickets are \$70 per person, \$100 per patron, and \$1000 for each corporate table. Order your tickets by calling Esprit's offices at 599-7880.

Monday, March 2
PATRIA V: "THE CROWN OF ARIADNE"

The Esprit Orchestra and harpist Judy Loman will be featured in Autumn Leaf Performance's concert presentation of R. Murray Schafer's opera, *The Crown of Ariadne* at the Jane Mallett Theatre, 8:00 p.m. *The Crown of Ariadne*, originally written for chamber ensemble, has been revised by Schafer to fit the full-sized Esprit Orchestra. Alex Pauk - Conductor.

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Double Concerto **

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Maurice Bourgue, oboe

Arthur Honegger (France)

Tomas Dusatko (Canada)

Robert Aitken (Canada)

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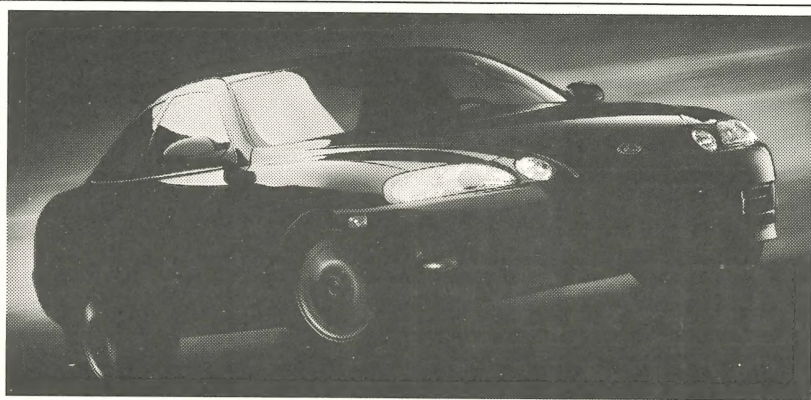
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